



Rick Greif's

# RickRealtor News

"Insider Tips For Healthy, Wealthy & Happy Living..."

July / Aug 2011

Austin, Texas

☀ Summer ☀

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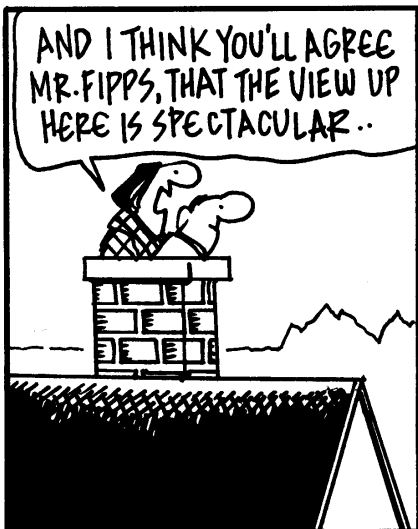
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## Summer Fun in Austin

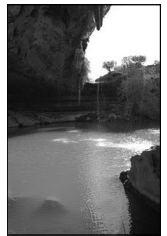
**Blues on the Green.** Zilker Park every other Wed (Jun 8—Aug 17) at 7:30 pm.

One of Austin's great music traditions, Blues on the Green, KGSR's hugely popular and free Austin summer music series, has been going strong since 1991. The outdoor concert series runs every other Wednesday and features some of the very best musical talent in Austin and the surrounding region. FREE!



**Hamilton Pool Historic Swimming hole.** Daily 9AM to 6PM

Since the 1960's, Hamilton Pool has been a favorite summer swimming spot for Austin visitors and residents. Formed long ago by the collapse of a large grotto (cave) into Hamilton Creek, featuring a 50-foot waterfall into a large green pool. Swimming, picnicking, hiking and nature study opportunities are available. A great place to take your summer visitors from out of town! \$10/vehicle per day. Call ahead (512) 264-2740



**Zilker Theatre Productions - Zilker Summer Musical!**

Dedicated to the celebration and preservation of that unique American art form, the Broadway musical, Zilker Theatre Productions is offering a large scale production of FOOTLOOSE. July 8 - August 13, 2011, Thursdays-Sundays approx. 8:30pm [at dusk]. Beverly S. Sheffield Hillside Theater in Austin's beautiful Zilker Park. Admission: FREE! - parking: \$3/car



**Shore Club Volente Beach: Like a small Schillerbahn,**

The perfect getaway for children and adults alike on a hot summer day. With pools for children and an adult only pool with a swim up tiki bar. sandy beachfront, 3 volleyball courts, plus a casual restaurant but picnics are permitted, so load up the cooler and go. SCVB is located on the north edge of Lake Travis. For info: [www.shoreclubtx.com/water-park.php](http://www.shoreclubtx.com/water-park.php)



**Hartman Foundation "Concerts in the Park"** These outdoor park concerts, which last just one hour, are an ideal opportunity for everyone to enjoy the fine music presented by the Austin Symphony and the magnificent cityscape views of downtown Austin. Concertgoers are encouraged to bring a picnic dinner and blanket and make it a group outing. Sunday evenings Thru August 28, 2011 8:30 PM. Hartman Concert Park at the Long Center.



**The Blanton Museum of Art—FREE on Thursdays!**

This is not an exclusive-to-summer event, but it's good to note if you want some free air-conditioned fun. The Blanton usually charges admission, but on Thursdays from 10am to 5pm, it's free!





### Good To Know

The United States has implemented a new terrorism alert system, replacing the color-coded one.

Advisories will categorize threats as "elevated," indicating a "credible" terrorist threat against the US, and "imminent," warning of a "credible, specific and impending" threat. Alerts may be sent to law enforcement, the private sector, or issued to the public on **Facebook**, **Twitter** and [www.dhs.gov/alerts](http://www.dhs.gov/alerts).

### Computer Wisdom

- Computers are incredibly fast, accurate and stupid; humans are incredibly slow, inaccurate and brilliant; together they are powerful beyond imagination.
- Alert! User Error. Please replace user and press any key to continue.
- I'm not anti-social; I'm just not user friendly.



### Another Reason To Put Down The Phone



Do you get itchy bumps along your cheek or ear? You could have a cell phone rash. It's really a nickel allergy, which affects 17

percent of women and 3 percent of men. If that's not it, you might be allergic to the electro-magnetic transmissions from cell phones.

### Thoughts to Ponder... With George Carlin

- Some national parks have waiting lists for camping reservations. When you have to wait a year to sleep next to a tree, something is wrong.
- It's never just a game when you're winning.
- If it's true that our species is alone in the universe, then I'd have to say that the universe aimed rather low and settled for very little.
- Don't sweat the petty things and don't pet the sweaty things.

• AND ALWAYS REMEMBER: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.



## Help Prevent Wildfires!

**Humans cause more than 90 percent of all wildfires.**

**Unsafe burning of leaves, brush, household trash and other debris is the No. 1 cause of wildfires in Texas.**



The Texas Forest Service released several tips to help prevent fires:

- Obey outdoor burning bans. Don't burn trash or debris when conditions are dry or windy.
- Develop an evacuation plan for your family. Resources are available at [texasfirestorm.org](http://texasfirestorm.org).
- Remove flammable materials from around your home.
- Keep lawn mowers and equipment in proper working condition and avoid rocks and other materials which might cause a spark.
- To report suspicious activities, call the Arson Hotline at (888) 501-3850. If possible, safely obtain an accurate description of the person and/or vehicle (including the license number) before calling the hotline.

## Drought FAQ's

### Q. What is the Drought of Record?

A. It is the decade-long drought that affected Central Texas from the late 1940s through the late 1950s. No other drought in recent history was as severe for such a long period of time. LCRA and other regional and state organizations use it as a benchmark to compare recent droughts and to prepare for future droughts.

### Q: What is causing the drought in 2011?

A. A lack of rain, caused by a strong La Niña weather pattern that started in late 2010. The Highland Lakes were built to store water during rainy times so that the water can be used during dry times. The result is lower lake levels. The lakes are doing their job.

### Q: How long will the drought last?

A. It is not possible to accurately predict exactly how long the drought will last. 2011 is expected to be a dry year because of a strong La Niña weather pattern. However, a strong La Niña often means a strong tropical storm season, so that might offer some relief. But rain must fall in the right place and for a sufficient amount of time to fill the Highland Lakes.

*(visit [www.lcra.org](http://www.lcra.org) for more Drought FAQ's)*

## Help Save Water

Taking simple steps can help the Colorado River, our primary water supply, last through the drought.

It's easy and it doesn't require much sacrifice.



- Don't overwater your landscape.
- Follow your utility's watering schedule. Water your lawn no more than half an inch, twice a week.
- Water between dusk and dawn, never during the middle of the day, to minimize evaporation.
- Check sprinkler systems frequently and repair or replace broken sprinkler heads so you're irrigating your lawn, not your sidewalk, home or street.
- To save water indoors, fix leaks and replace outdated toilets and fixtures.
- For more water-saving tips, visit [www.lcra.org/savewater](http://www.lcra.org/savewater).



## HOW HOT IS IT? An Ode To Texas

The devil wanted a place on earth  
Sort of a summer home  
A place to spend his vacation  
Whenever he wanted to roam.

So he picked out Texas  
A place both wretched and rough  
Where the climate was to his liking  
And the people strong and tough.

He dried up the streams in canyons  
And ordered no rain to fall  
He dried up the lakes in the valleys  
Then baked and scorched it all.

Then over his barren country  
He transplanted shrubs from hell.  
The cactus, thistle and prickly pear  
The climate suited them well.

He ordered the sun to shine hotter,  
Hotter and hotter still.  
Until even the cactus wilted  
And the old horned lizard took ill.

He gazed on his earthly kingdom  
As any creator would  
He chuckled a little up his sleeve  
And admitted that it was good.

'Twas summer now and Satan lay  
By a prickly pear to rest.  
The sweat rolled off his swarthy brow  
So he took off his coat and vest.

"By Golly," he finally panted,  
"I did my job too well,  
I'm going back where I came from,  
Texas is hotter than Hell."



## Austin is **H O T** ... And We Love It!

Austin is a regular on national "Best-Of" lists. Below are a few to help you remember why you LOVE to live here, even during the Heat Wave of 2011!



### Austin No. 5 in "greatness" study.



Austin was ranked fifth on a new list of cities considered to be poised on the edge of greatness. The rankings were compiled by research firm Sperling's BestPlaces based on such factors as sports, art, music, culture and population growth. The report had this to say about Austin: "Known for its 'Keep Austin Weird' tagline, Austin may soon boast about greatness instead. The 'Live Music Capital of the World' ranks fourth in the category of indie (independent) music and nails the top spot in the city category with a high percentage of young, well-educated residents, a healthy economy and substantial green building activity."

### Austin 2011-2012 Forecast Predicts Booming Job Growth



The Austin economy is expected to gain more jobs in 2011 and 2012 and stabilize back to pre-recession growth trends. This past year, only 8,200 jobs were added to the Austin workforce, a measly growth rate of 1.1%. In 2011, the Austin economy is expected to pick up 18,800 more jobs at a 2.5% job growth rate. And in 2012, Austin's job growth rate is predicted to be in the 3% range with predictions of 25,100 more jobs! Industries with the most job growth include leisure, hospitality and information. Job growth will remain strong in government, education, health care services, and retail.

### Austin Home Prices Expected to Rise.



Austin home prices are expected to begin recovering this year and grow by at least .6 percent, according to an analysis from Fisery Inc. According to the report, Austin home prices have been stable since reaching bottom in the fourth quarter 2010 and prices are expected to increase through 2012 at a rate of about .4 percent.

### Austin is one of Top Ten Greenest Cities in US.



Carbon neutral by 2020 — it's an ambitious goal, but Austin Energy is the nation's top seller of renewable energy among 850 utility-sponsored programs, which makes its goal to power the city solely on clean energy within reach. As the gateway to the scenic Texas Hill Country, acreage in Austin that's devoted to green space includes 206 parks, 12 preserves, 26 greenbelts and more than 50 miles of trails.

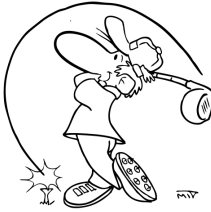
### AND ... Austin is a "Dog Friendly" city!



Austin was ranked the 3rd most dog-friendly city, according to a DogFriendly.com listing of cities with pet-accommodating transportation, parks, attractions, stores and dining. From Freddie's Place to the endless number of courtyard coffee shops and cafes, Austin was listed for its overwhelming number of dog-friendly eateries. The dog lover's blog and information site also recognized dog-friendly Zilker Botanical Gardens and 12 off-leash dog parks. San Diego took the No. 1 spot, followed by Portland, Ore. Austin was the only Texas city on the top 10 list, though San Antonio was given an honorary mention.

## Golf Tips

Chapter Titles  
from a sure-to-  
be-a-best-seller  
Golf Guide:



1. Using Curse Words Creatively to Control Ball Flight.
2. How to Get More distance off the Shank
3. How to Properly Line Up Your Fourth Putt
4. Using Your Shadow on the greens to Maximize earnings
5. How to rationalize a 6-Hour round
6. How to find that Ball that Everyone Else Saw go into the water.
7. Why your Spouse doesn't Care That You Birdied the 5th.
8. When to Let a Foursome Play through your Twosome.
9. When to suggest Major Swing Corrections to Your Opponent.
10. When to re-grip Your Ball Retriever
11. Throwing Your Clubs: an effective Stress-Reduction Technique.
12. Proper Excuses for Drinking Beer before 9AM.

### Quotes To Live By...

If it takes a lot of words to say what you have in mind, give it more thought.

—Dennis Roth

I like this positive quote, "Whenever you fall, pick something up."

—Oswald Avery

THANK YOU for reading my  
**RickRealtor News** personal  
newsletter.

Your comments and feedback  
are always welcome.

AND... if you're thinking of  
buying or selling real estate ...  
or just want to call and say "Hi"  
I'd love to hear from you...

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Rick Greif



## The Back Page

...by Rick Greif

### Why "They" Are Saying to Buy A Home Now

Despite what appears to be a non-stop wave of tough news regarding real estate, four major media players have come out last month with the same advice: *It Is Time to Buy a Home!*

Here are the source and titles to four recent articles that came out in June:

The Wall Street Journal: *Why it's Time to Buy*

CBS Money Watch: *Why the Time to Buy is Now*

Forbes Magazine: *9 Reasons to Buy a House Now*

National Public Radio: *For Many, It's Still a Good Time to Buy a Home*

With prices continuing to depreciate in most regions of the country, some may wonder why these four entities are suggesting to their readership that now is the time to buy. Each organization realizes that PRICE is not as important as COST. The cost of a home can go up even if prices continue to fall. Unless you are an all-cash buyer, you must take into consideration the expense of mortgaging when calculating the full cost of a home.

#### Here is some information to consider:

► **Interest Rates:** Currently, interest rates sit at historic lows. However, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, PMI and the National Association of Realtors are all projecting approximately a 1% increase in mortgage rates over the next year. *A one percent increase in rate negates a ten percent fall in price.*

► **Cost of Renting:** Rent prices are expected to go UP and UP.

► **Lending Standards:** The government has proposed a tightening of lending standards called Quality Residential Mortgage (QRM). If accepted as proposed, three things will happen:

1. The qualification process for loans will become more difficult
2. The cost of a loan will increase
3. Higher down payments may be required.

**Bottom Line:** There is a reason financial organizations are suggesting to their followers that now is the time to buy a home: **because the cost of purchasing a home is about to increase** (even if prices continue to fall).

#### Favorite Family Recipe: **Refreshing "Slushee Punch"**

- 1-1/3 cup water
- 1-1/3 cup sugar
- 1-3/4 oz. red cinnamon candies (3 heaping tablespoons)
- Juice of 6 lemons (1 cup lemon juice)
- Juice of 8 medium oranges (2 cups juice)
- 1 quart Loganberry juice (I have never found this so I use pineapple juice)
- 1 can frozen pineapple (6 oz.)
- 2 quarts club soda

Combine water, sugar and red cinnamon candies. Boil together for 5 minutes. Set aside to cool. Squeeze lemons and oranges. Add juices to the sugar mixture. Add pineapple and loganberry (if used). Pour into 3 quarts freeze container with snap-on lid and freeze. Before serving, allow to thaw partially. Add club soda. Can add cherries, lemon and orange slices on top for garnish.

You won't  
believe how  
**GOOD this is!!!**